

31. (Amended) Interactive rule editing apparatus for editing a rule which is to be added to a set thereof, each rule specifying a condition and an action and being interpreted in a system which causes the action specified in the rule to be performed when the condition specified in the rule is satisfied, the interactive rule editing apparatus comprising:

input means;

output means;

means for determining whether the rule to be added [is valid] to control the personal software agent conflicts with another rule with regard to the set thereof and if the rule to be added [is not valid] does conflict, providing a suggested correction;

means for altering the rule; and wherein

the input means receives the rule to be added and provides the rule to be added to the means for determining;

the output means receives the suggested correction and outputs the suggested correction;

the input means receives an indication that the suggested correction has been accepted; and

the means for altering the rule responds to the indication by altering the rule to be added in accordance with the suggested correction.

REMARKS

Introduction

Claims 1-31 remain pending in this application.

As a preliminary matter, claims 24-30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Claims 24 and 27 have been amended and claims 24-30 now fully comply with § 112.

Claims 5-11 and 17-23 stand rejected as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten into independent form. Claims 5 and 17 have been rewritten as suggested by the Examiner. Thus, claims 5-11 and 17-23 are allowable as indicated in the Office Action. Please note that the limitation of claim 4 has not been included in claim 5 as amended.

• Similarly, the limitation of claim 16 has not been included in claim 17.

Claims 27-30 have not been rejected based on prior art. Claim 27 has been rewritten into independent form and is therefor allowable, along with claims 28-30 dependent thereon.

Claims 1-4, 12-16, 24-26 and 31 stand rejected in view of certain prior art. It is asserted that claims 1-3, 12-15, 24-26 and 31 are anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102 by U.S. Patent No.4,891,766 to Derr et al. (the "Derr patent"). Additionally, it is asserted that claims 4 and 16 are unpatentable over the Derr patent in view of the CLASSIC programming environment. The applicants respectfully submit that the Derr patent fails to show (1) determining whether rules conflict with each other and (2) rules to control a personal software agent as recited in claims 1, 12, 24 and 31 and thus these claims are allowable over the cited prior art. This distinction will be further described in the following section.

The Claims Distinguish Over the Derr Patent

Claims 1, 12, 24 and 31 as amended each recite that when a rule is created the agent manager determines "whether said rule conflicts with another rule," or similar language, and nothing in the Derr patent suggests such a feature. The Derr patent is directed to an editor for an expert system. When a new sub-node is added to a node, the system checks to see if the maximum allowable number of sub-nodes has been reached. (Column 8, lines 3-8.) Such a check does not determine whether a rule "conflicts" with another rule as recited in the amended claims.

For example, a rule to move all e-mail messages from Tom to a folder called Tom_Mail would "conflict" with a rule to move all e-mail messages with a subject of RDDI to a folder called RDDI_Project because some messages would be covered by both rules. (Page 24, lines 15-24.) This determination is not related to the maximum allowable number of sub-nodes on a node.

Moreover, claims 1, 12, 24 and 31 have been amended to highlight an aspect of the invention which was only alluded to in the preambles of these claims in their original form. Specifically, the claims now recite the creation of "rule[s] to control the personal software agent." The Derr patent is directed to an editor that lets a user classify and link logical nodes in

• an expert system. The Derr patent completely fails to disclose how a user could program a personal software agent using an agent manager.

In view of the above comments, it is respectfully submitted that the Derr patent does not anticipate the invention as defined by independent claims 1, 12, 24 and 31.

Since claims 1, 12, 24 and 31 are allowable, the claims dependent therefrom, namely 2-4, 13-16 and 25-26 are also allowable. Further remarks regarding the asserted relationship between these claims and the prior art is not necessary, in view of their allowability. The Applicants' silence as to the Examiner's comments is not indicative of an acquiescence to the stated grounds of rejection.

Conclusions

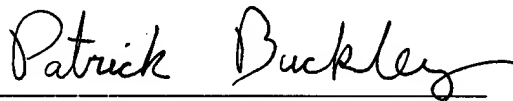
In view of the comments and amendments submitted above the Applicants respectfully assert that the claims clearly and patentably define the invention. Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of all outstanding rejections and objections.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (202) 429-1776 to discuss any matter concerning this application.

The Office is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees or credit any overpayments under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or § 1.17 to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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